

Message Text

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14

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03

SS-15 USIA-15 ACDA-19 OMB-01 AID-20 DRC-01 /165 W

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P R 140950Z SEP 73

FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7077

INFO AMCONSUL NHA TRANG

AMCONSUL BIEN HOA

AMCONSUL DANANG

AMCONSUL CAN THO

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USDEL JEC PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 16418

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, VS

SUBJ: ANOTHER SPATE OF BAO DAI RUMORS

1. SAIGON IS CURRENTLY EXPERIENCING ANOTHER OF ITS PERIODIC WAVES OF RUMORS THAT BAO DAI IS ABOUT TO RETURN TO SVN. IT IS SPECULATED HE WILL PLAY SOME ROLE IN THE "THIRD FORCE", PERHAPS AS CHAIRMAN OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF NATIONAL RECONCILIATION AND CONCORD (NCNRC). MOST OF THE IMPETUS FOR THE CURRENT SPATE OF BAO DAI TALK

COMES FROM MEMBERS OF HIS FAMILY; THEIR MAIN FORUM IS SAIGON DAILY CONG LUAN, WHOSE EDITOR TON THAT DINH IS A MEMBER OF THE FAMILY. WE KNOW OF NO JUSTIFICATION FOR THE RUMORS.

2. ON SEPT 13 THE GVN PRESS SPOKESMAN SOUGHT TO THROW COLD WATER ON THE STORIES. ACCORDING TO THE SPOKESMAN AS QUOTED IN OFFICIAL VIET NAM PRESS, COMMISSIONER GENERAL FOR NATIONAL INFORMATION HOANG DUC NHA HAS HIMSELF TERMED THE BAO BAI RUMORS "FABRICATIONS DESIGNED TO DECEIVE PUBLIC OPINION." THE SPOKESMAN RECALLED
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OFFICIAL DENIALS THAT A RECENT TRIP BY NHA TO SEVERAL ASIAN

COUNTRIES HAD ANY CONNECTION WITH FORMATION OF A "THIRD FORCE" ELEMENT ON THE NCNRC. HOWEVER, THE SPOKESMAN ADDED, "THE RVN HAS NEVER INTENDED TO FORBID ANY VIETNAMESE CITIZEN LIVING OVERSEAS THE RIGHT TO RETURN TO THE COUNTRY, INCLUDING EX-EMPEROR BAO DAI." WHETHER HE RETURNS TO SVN OR NOT IS NOT A CONCERN OF THE RVN, THE SPOKESMAN SAID, NOTING IN CONCLUSION RECENT REPORTS FROM PARIS QUOTING BAO DAI HIMSELF AS BEING "SURPRISED" AT THE TALK OF AN IMINENT RETURN. SAIGON PAPERS APPEARING SEPT 14 FEATURE EXCERPTS FROM A PARIS REUTERS INTERVIEW WITH BAO DAI IN WHICH HE SAID HE IS NOT RETURNING TO SVN SOON.

3. COMMENT: THE GVN SPOKESMAN'S STATEMENT IMPLYING THAT BAO DAI IS FREE TO RETURN TO SVN IS OPEN TO QUESTION. MORE RESPONSIBLE MEMBERS OF THE ROYAL FAMILY THAN TON THAT DINH, LIKE SENATOR TON THAT NIEM, WHILE HOPING FOR AN EVENTUAL RETURN DO NOT BELIEVE IT LIKELY, OR EVEN POSSIBLE AT THIS TIME.

4. THERE ARE REPORTS THAT NGUYEN VAN TAM, A FORMER PRIMIN AND SENIOR SECURITY OFFICIAL UNDER BAO DAI, MAY BE RETURNING TO SAIGON IN THE VERY NEAR FUTURE. TAM, 78, HAS BEEN IN EXILE SINCE THE EARLY 1950'S. IT IS UNCLEAR WHY THE GVN MIGHT PERMIT TAM'S RETURN AT THIS POINT, UNLESS BECAUSE OF HIS ADVANCED AGE, AND ON CONDITION THAT HE STAY CLEAR OF POLITICS. THIS IS ALL THE MORE THE CASE AS TAM'S SON, EX-GENERAL NGUYEN VAN HINH, IS STILL ACTIVE IN ANTI-GVN EXPATRIATE POLITICAL CIRCLES. IN ANY EVENT, TAM'S RETURN, IF IT OCCURS, WILL CONTINUE TO FUEL THE BAO DAI AND "THIRD FORCE" RUMORS, BUT AT THIS POINT WE CAN FORSEE NO REAL POLITICAL COMPLICATIONS FOR THIEU ARISING THEREFROM.

5. FOR PARIS: WOULD APPRECIATE TEXT OF REPORTED REUTERS INTERVIEW WITH BAO DAI.
APPLING

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